

March 30, 2022

SB-12: AN ACT AUTHORIZING AND ADJUSTING BONDS OF THE STATE FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND JOBS ACT MATCHING FUNDS AND EXTENDING THE TIME PERIOD FOR DISTRIBUTING GRANTS FOR CERTAIN LAW ENFORCEMENT EQUIPMENT.

On behalf of the Friends of Machimoodus and Sunrise State Parks, I am submitting this letter of testimony in strong support of SB-12, specifically the increased bonding investment of \$15 million for State Parks infrastructure included in Section 11 of the bill.

As a group, the Friends of Machimoodus and Sunrise State Parks have worked very hard over the past several years to gain recognition and support in the community and throughout the area. We have come a very long way from the early days of struggling just to get enough board members to incorporate our organization. While we still have a few operational goals to meet, we have grown substantially as an organization; we now have a dedicated executive board, a website, a PO box, and a large and ever-growing social media presence. Over the years, we have participated annually in many outdoor recreational based programs such as First Day Hike, Trails Day and the CT River Source-To-Sea Clean Up and we have recently started hosting our own events. We are an important point of contact between the community and the park staff. We consistently provide information that benefits park-goers and members of the community.

We are all well aware that DEEP has a backlog of nearly \$130 million in critical maintenance, repairs, and other much needed infrastructure improvement projects at State Parks. Some investments are necessary to renovate historic structures, but significant investments are also required to ensure facilities are more accessible to all, especially to those with mobility challenges. For example, the roadway to the boat launch, which is supposed to be accessible to all, has been closed to motor vehicles because it is not safe for travel.

Our group urges Committee members to consider the long-standing need for capital investments in Connecticut's State Parks, especially now that so many of our residents and visitors are seeking more outdoor recreational opportunities. Additionally, state parks support and are host to vital wildlife pathways and corridors that keep our eco-systems, and in turn our communities, healthy and thriving.

Please support bonding in SB 12 for infrastructure improvements that are essential to ensuring the many values that State Parks provide to all of us.

Thank you for the important work you do, and for the opportunity to testify today on this bill.

~Tanya Bourgoïn,

President of the Friends of Machimoodus and Sunrise State Parks

